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Trade Policy Monitoring

EU Parliamentary Rejection of Proposal on Humane Trapping Standards

2005

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Report Highlights:

On December 15, 1997, Canada and the EU signed the "Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards" (AIHTS). Russia also signed this agreement in April of 1998. Although the US is not a party to the agreement, a parallel, non-binding understanding, memorialized as an agreed minute and side letters, was reached with the EU in 1997. In November 2004, the EU reported that a Commission proposal for a Directive introducing humane trapping standards for certain animal species had been adopted by the Commission on July 30, 2004, in compliance with the AIHTS. In October 2005, the European Parliament's Environment Committee rejected the proposal by a large majority, as did the Members of the European Parliament at the Plenary Session in November. The EU is currently looking at alternatives to introducing and implementing reasonable and realistic common EU standards to limit animal suffering and promote humane trapping.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Brussels USEU [BE2]
[E3]

Background

On December 15, 1997, Canada and the EU signed the "[Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards](#)"¹ (AIHTS). Russia also signed this agreement in April of 1998. Although the US is not a party to the agreement, a parallel, non-binding understanding, memorialized as an [agreed minute](#)² and side letters, was reached with the EU in 1997.

US Efforts on Humane Trapping

In order to meet its obligations under the AIHTS understanding, the US has spent more than \$4.5 million, (in the form of Federal funds, private funds and State contributions) to support the US national trap-testing program. Efforts to carry out the US program declaration to the EU were congressionally directed to the US Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and are managed by Wildlife Services through cooperative agreements with The International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (IAFWA) and cooperating universities. Since the start of the US testing program (1997), more than 70 types of commercially available traps have been tested on 15 species in 33 States directly involved. This effort, involving Federal and State government agencies, is one of the most ambitious, nationally coordinated efforts in wildlife management undertaken in the US in recent years.

EU Efforts on Humane Trapping

In November 2004, the EU reported that a Commission proposal for a Directive introducing humane trapping standards for certain animal species had been adopted by the Commission on July 30, 2004. The proposal mirrors the content of the AIHTS, although it does not prevent Member States from widening the scope of the agreement and applying humane trapping standards to animal species other than those listed in the Agreement. At the time, the US expressed that as a result of continued lobbying, the EU final directive would be expanded as it moved through the European Parliament, thus not accurately reflecting the aim of the AIHTS.

Throughout 2005, the European Parliament's Environment Committee (the committee to which humane trapping efforts were delegated) continued to debate on the proposed legislation on humane trapping standards. The proposal has continually met with fierce opposition, with MEP Karin Scheele (Germany, Socialist) leading the way. Objections to the proposal argued that the list of species covered by the Directive proposal was arbitrary, and a number of amendments were presented in July 2005. In response to this opposition, the Commission stressed that besides the prohibition of leghold traps, which is upheld in the proposal, there are no harmonized rules for other types of traps currently being used, and the aim of this proposal is to set minimum standards for those traps, in accordance with the international agreement. The Commission also expressed concern that failure to pass the legislation could re-open discussion with the US, Canada and Russia.

In October 2005, the Environment Committee rejected the proposal by a large majority. The European Parliament rejected the proposal definitively at its Plenary Session of December 13, 2005³.

¹ http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/1998/L_042/L_04219980214en00430057.pdf

² http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/1998/L_219/L_21919980807en00260037.pdf

³ <http://www.europarl.eu.int/omk/sipade3?PUBREF=-//EP//NONSGML+REPORT+A6-2005-0304+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN&L=EN&LEVEL=2&NAV=S&LSTDOC=Y>

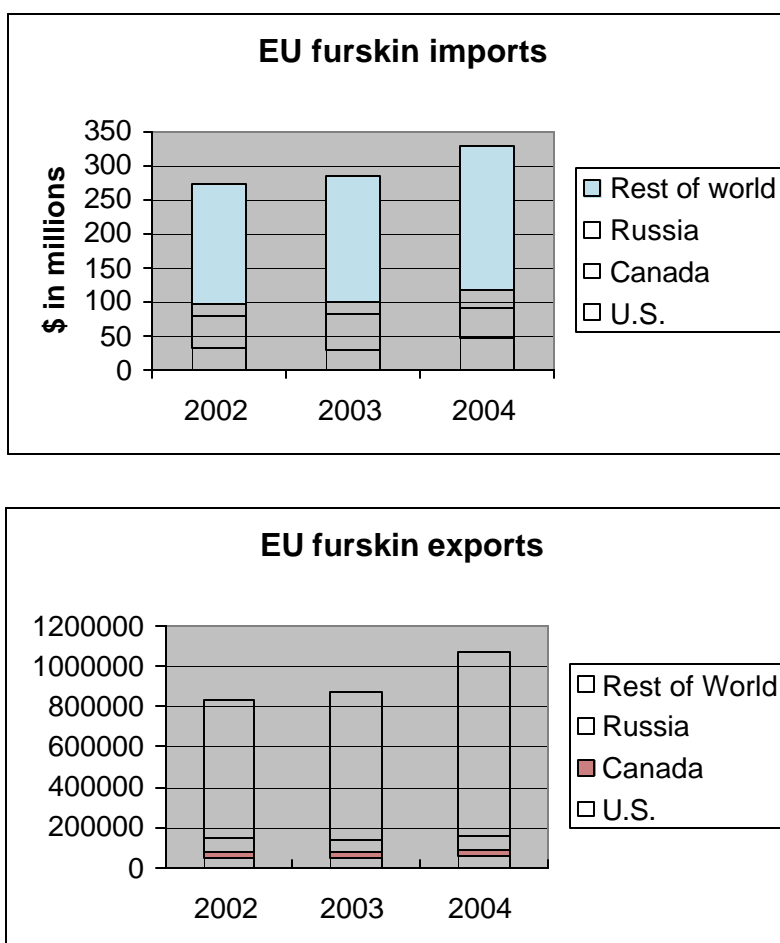
Next Steps

The fifth, and most recent, provisional Joint Management committee (JMC) meeting under the AIHTS was held in Quebec City, Canada in November of 2005. While the rejection of the proposal by the European Parliament is a setback to the implementation of the AIHTS, the EU is exploring different avenues to introduce reasonable and realistic common EU standards to limit animal suffering. The Commission is examining the issue further, and hopes to evaluate the current science with regard to trapping.

Trade Data

The following table highlights EU-US trade in raw furskins and tanned or dressed furskins. The corresponding HS codes used to conduct these trade runs are 4301 and 4302. Of the signatories of the Agreement, Canada followed by the US and then Russia accounts for the most exports of furskins into the EU, while EU exports of furskins are greatest to Russia followed by the US and then Canada.

EU Trade in Furskins



Source: Global Trade Atlas⁴

⁴ Global Trade Atlas reports official import/export data. However, these figures may be subsequently adjusted, as countries update their figures. Therefore, these statistics may differ slightly from previous and future reports detailing trade in furskins.

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Report Number	Title	Date Released
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E35054	EU Debate on Humane Trapping Standards for Certain Animal Species	03/18/2005
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